

Helpful Hints from the REAP Grant Selection Committee

4-5-04

1. Be sure to keep the scoring criteria in mind; make sure your project fits the criteria and the REAP program.
2. Make sure the proposal is closely targeted to the goals and objective of the REAP program. The programs name is Resource Enhancement and Protection and good grants are directly tied to that.
3. Good pictures are important. Show the project area from all vantage points with good captions. Maps and original aerials photos are very helpful; make sure they are clearly understandable.
4. No fancy packaging (3-ring binders, plastic covers, etc.) are allowed. They get in the way!
5. Make sure the budget is clear and concise with unit costs. Don't use "miscellaneous supplies" as a budget item.
6. Don't ramble and provide "fluff" in your narrative. Be sure to provide clear, concise narrative of what you plan to do. Make sure the purpose of the project is clear.
7. Some level of local support goes a long way, either hard or soft match.
8. The applicants need to show long range plans, even if only in concept; especially for acquisition projects.
9. Emphasize passive recreation aspects of the project, and show that it is truly passive in nature and not supportive of such activities as athletic fields.
10. The wider the scope the better the project will score. For example if the project involves tree planting, habitat restoration, aquatics, regional or statewide appeal, historic preservation, etc., it will do better.
11. Have someone not familiar with your project review your application to see if they understand it, have questions, etc. prior to submitting it.
12. Follow the application outline and specifically address the issues explained in the guidelines (No. 14).
13. If you have someone on staff that is capable, write your own grant. If you do use a grant writer, the project sponsor needs to stay intimately involved with the grant writing process. The grant writer may not need to write the entire application; the project sponsor can pick and choose which parts of the application may need some help.

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14. The application should mostly be about the specific project you are asking money for, even though it might be part of a bigger project. The specific project needs to stand alone. If you include plans/cost breakdowns for all phases of the overall project, make sure you clearly identify the specific part that this application is for.
15. Sometimes, highly specific information is helpful. For example, do not just say you will plant native species; give a list of species and diagram of where they will be planted. Do not just say: "This area will be developed into a park." Rather, give a list and show placement of equipment, shelters, plantings, etc. Along with that, give a breakdown of costs for all pieces of the project.
16. Get all the required signatures.
17. Clear, simple writing is critical. Grant readers do not have time to read endless pages.
18. Always verify budget figures. Padded budgets are obvious to evaluators; under budgeted applications, likewise, show that you don't understand what the project entails.
19. Do not file the same proposal the following year without updating it. It can't be a very important project if nothing has happened in one year's time.
20. Broad support is critical. A plan that is just an idea of one department, the mayor or the city council does not show the support of the full community.
21. Don't assume, allege, infer. No one understands your claims as well as you wish they did.
22. Let others do the praising. Don't load your proposals with "we are the best" claims. Let others say the good things about your program and organization by including quotes within the text of the grant.
23. Neatness and accuracy matter—your application is the sole source of information about your project, your organization, and your ability to carry through with it.
24. Get started early.